

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

Field of Study: TESOL (1090 words)

The first time I saw a Vietnamese talking to a foreigner on a street of Hanoi, I thought it was a miracle. How could these two people of different races and skin colors walk hand in hand and they were not talking in Vietnamese! I felt so embarrassed I wanted to die on my feet when the foreigner noticed my curiosity. But he gave me a friendly smile and must have said hello, I guessed. I had blamed myself for not being able to speak a foreign language at that time and swore that one day I would shake hands and talk confidently with a foreigner. Unfortunately, the secondary school where I was studying did not offer any foreign language course. I desperately looked forward to high-school. But when I set foot in the high school of my province, the English teacher, also the only foreign language teacher there, moved. I made an important decision: I enrolled in a high school in another province where they taught English. The long and hard bicycle rides to and from school every day are still fresh in my mind.

Truly, since the very beginning of my English studies, I have had a great interest in every lesson I have learnt as well as the lectures I have given. To me, learning a language is not just getting to know how to speak it, but you also learn about the country, its people, its culture. It does not just simply help people communicate. It is the very means to bring people all over the world closer together no matter what skin color, what blood, or what religion. And the language teachers do not just teach a language but also help break down boundaries between human beings around the world. Thus, I think teaching a language is a great honor. This was also the reason why I quit my first job as a secretary in a power transmission company. My decision went against all my family members and friends because they could not understand why I gave up a well-paid and stable job. But I have never regretted choosing teaching English as my life career.

In terms of academic and career achievements, I was able to maintain good results throughout my entire education from primary school to university. In particular, I graduated with the highest grade point average in the BA course 1994-1998 at Hue University of Sciences. My second stage in university was marked by 55% excellent grades (9 and 10, or A grade) and 39% good grades (7 and 8, or B grades). I have no doubt that I will be capable of maintaining good academic records if I am granted a fellowship to join the TESOL master program in the USA.

Besides, in pondering over the problems I have encountered during my teaching at my institution, I have succeeded in promoting a new ESP program for Business English, incorporating more hands-on tasks such as presentation and interviewing skills. The program has been applied for two courses and received good feedback. More and more students are attending the program and finding it much more interesting and helpful. I understand that in order to convince people, I must complete further studies to obtain profound knowledge and skills of the specialized field of TESOL. I want to obtain a master degree so as to promote changes for the sake of the English Department's expansion and development. In addition, my long-term academic plan is to obtain a PhD in applied linguistics or education.

As regards professional experience, I have been teaching English since 1998. At first, I only taught at night. My full-time teaching started in 2002 when I began work at \_\_\_\_\_. I realized that my real strength and aspiration is teaching. Throughout my studies at \_\_\_\_\_ University, I had always admired the dedication of my teachers, and I could feel the impact they were having on me and others studying under my tutelage. Far more than simply providing information, teachers in particular shaped students' ways of thinking and developed their career skills. English teachers do not just take the responsibility to provide students with a means for career strives, but actually aid in making people in different cultures closer together. If I can make my way to attend the master program in the U.S., I have no doubt that I will do my best to achieve good study results; and will make the most out of the opportunities presented to me.

As far as career development is concerned, an English major is now included in the training programs offered by my university. The demand for qualified manpower both in teaching and in management of the new specialty is posing a tremendous pressure. I am an ambitious person, yet I am aware that I need new qualifications to contribute to the new program and to step higher up the career ladder. Personally, I believe that the best way to pursue further education in the field of TESOL is to do it in a country where English is spoken natively and which has a reputed education system. I have found out about several TESOL master programs in Vietnam but I feel reluctant to enroll because of the inadequacy of many of the courses they provide. Hence, the master program in the United States sponsored by Fulbright is the best choice for me.

Last but not least, the United States is a powerful country which has influence in every aspect of our lives. This explains why many issues about America are included in all fields of study, especially in English courses. The new generation of Vietnamese students have many opportunities to broaden their knowledge about the U.S. and its relationship with their home country. Although older Vietnamese people may still now and then link Americans with images of the past, the new generation looks ahead. I belong to the generation born after the war. I want to promote new ideas and objective views about the United States for the coming generations of Vietnamese students.

All in all, participating in the program provides a sure opportunity for all nominees not just to gain expertise in their fields but also be instilled with new ideas and ways of thinking or accomplishing tasks. More importantly, they will be the ones to initiate opportunities to form new and better relationships between our two countries for a better world. With all my heart and soul, I hope the Fulbright program will nominate me for the fellowship of master in TESOL.